



This is an official
DHEC Health Advisory

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UPDATE: Tuberculosis in a School in Ninety-Six, South Carolina

Summary

DHEC is providing updated information regarding the investigation of tuberculosis in a school and guidance for health care providers.

To date, the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) tested five hundred and thirty-six (536) individuals as a result of an expanding TB contact investigation. Sixty-two (62) of the individuals had positive tuberculin skin tests (TST) and were sent for chest x-rays. Ten (10) abnormal chest X-rays have been identified. A chest X-Ray of a second employee at the elementary school has been read to confirm the individual has an active case of TB disease. The patient is under the care of a physician, and has begun treatment. This patient is infectious, and DHEC is requiring that they remain confined to their home. A contact investigation on this patient is underway. Where appropriate, treatment is being initiated.

This is an ongoing investigation. DHEC will continue to contact any additional persons who may have been exposed as part of this continuing investigation.

Outbreak Related Case Definition

For the purposes of this investigation, an outbreak related case is defined as:

- TST or Interferon-Gamma Release Assay (IGRA) screening test positive,
- AFB smear positive, or
- CXR findings suggestive of TB infection

in an individual who also has an epidemiologic link with a case related to this investigation during their infectious period defined as:

- Repeated or prolonged face-to-face contact with a case in a poorly ventilated area during the infectious period, or
- Significant exposure to an area of confined air space that would allow sustained suspension of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* in droplet nuclei.

Guidance for Clinicians

DHEC has issued a revision to the previously recommended testing model for potential contacts to the index case. DHEC **recommends** testing of individuals who have spent time in the school's **two classroom buildings**. DHEC will **offer** testing to any individual who has spent time in **any buildings** on the school's campus. The basis for the revision is that the two classroom buildings have confined airspace with a ventilation system that is conducive to TB transmission and transmission is documented to have occurred in the classroom buildings. The buildings outlying from the main classroom buildings are

not structurally conducive to TB transmission and no individuals with positive screenings tests have been associated with exposure to these buildings alone.

TB Screening

DHEC has contacted the majority of individuals for whom testing is recommended. Individuals that have not been contacted, yet are still concerned about a potential exposure at the school, should be advised about the known settings of transmission related to the index case and settings of low risk for exposure.

DHEC does not recommend TB skin testing on individuals at low risk of exposure and advises health care providers to be aware of false positive screening tests among low risk populations. DHEC recommendations for TB screening are consistent with Guidelines for the Investigation of Contacts of Persons with Infectious Tuberculosis (2). Health care providers can consult with DHEC about testing individuals who have not been notified by DHEC but who remain concerned about TB exposure in the school setting. DHEC is providing screening tests for all individuals for whom testing was recommended as part of this investigation. DHEC will charge for testing individuals who are not believed to be at risk of exposure.

Contacts to children with TB are not at risk for infection and contacts to children need not be tested. **“Transmission from children aged <10 years is unusual, although it has been reported in association with the presence of pulmonary forms of disease typically reported in adults. Contact investigations concerning pediatric cases should be undertaken only in such unusual circumstances.”** See page 4 of Guidelines for the Investigation of Contacts of Persons with Infectious Tuberculosis. Recommendations from the National Tuberculosis Controllers Association and CDC. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/rr/rr5415.pdf> for additional information.

Laboratory Testing

Specimen Collection:

Health care providers should follow appropriate infection control precautions when collecting clinical specimens in order to prevent the transmission of TB in health-care settings (3).

Specimen Submission:

The DHEC Bureau of Laboratories can perform cultures for *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* on sputum and other body fluids. DHEC requests that clinical specimens obtained from individuals who are suspected to be contacts for this investigation be submitted to the DHEC Bureau of Laboratories.

Use DHEC Request Form 1335. Include the patient demographic information and the specimen collection/source. Enter the Outbreak Number 13-109 in the Special Instructions and/or Comments: field on the laboratory submission slip.

Indicate Test #601: Clinical Specimen for ID and smear.

Refer to BoL Services Guide section II-30 Mycobacterial Culture, other than Blood for specimen collection and submission guidelines. If you have any additional questions please contact the DHEC Mycobacteriology (TB) Laboratory at 803-896-0828.

Reporting of Cases

- Positive TB screening tests that are potentially related to this investigation should be reported to the DHEC TB Control Division at 803-898-0558.
- Cases of confirmed Tuberculosis are urgently reportable to DHEC within 24 hours. Cases can be reported at the numbers listed below under *Regional Health Offices 2013*.

For additional information, please contact 1-888-354-3113.

Resources for additional information:

- Controlling Tuberculosis in the United States. Recommendations from the American Thoracic Society, CDC, and the Infectious Diseases Society of America.
<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5412.pdf>
- Guidelines for the Investigation of Contacts of Persons with Infectious Tuberculosis. Recommendations from the National Tuberculosis Controllers Association and CDC.
<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/rr/rr5415.pdf>
- Guidelines for Preventing the Transmission of *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* in Health-Care Settings, 2005.
http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5417a1.htm?s_cid=rr5417a1_e

DHEC has established a webpage to provide information relative to this investigation as it is confirmed. Please check it for regular updates. A link is found at the top of the agency's homepage:
<http://www.scdhec.gov>

DHEC contact information for reportable diseases and reporting requirements

Reporting of Tuberculosis is consistent with South Carolina law requiring the reporting of diseases and conditions to your state or local public health department (State Law # 44-29-10 and Regulation # 61-20). The DHEC 2013 List of Reportable Conditions is available at:
<http://www.scdhec.gov/health/disease/reportables.htm>

Federal HIPAA legislation allows disclosure of protected health information, without consent of the individual, to public health authorities to collect and receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease (HIPAA 45 CFR §164.512).

Regional Public Health Offices – 2013

Mail or call reports to the Epidemiology Office in each Public Health Region.

LOW COUNTRY PUBLIC HEALTH REGION

Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester
4050 Bridge View Drive, Suite 600
N. Charleston, SC 29405
Phone: (843) 953-0047
Fax: (843) 953-0051
Nights / Weekends: (843) 219-8470

Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, Jasper
219 S. Lemacks Street
Walterboro, SC 29488
Phone: (843) 441-1091
Fax: (843) 549-6845
Nights / Weekends: (843) 441-1091

Allendale, Bamberg, Calhoun, Orangeburg
PO Box 1126
1550 Carolina Avenue
Orangeburg, SC 29116
Phone: (803) 268-5833
Fax: (803) 533-7134
Nights / Weekends: (803) 535-9265

MIDLANDS PUBLIC HEALTH REGION

Fairfield, Lexington, Newberry, Richland
2000 Hampton Street
Columbia, SC 29204
Phone: (803) 576-2749
Fax: (803) 576-2993
Nights / Weekends: 1-888-554-9915

Chester, Kershaw, Lancaster, York
PO Box 817
1833 Pageland Highway
Lancaster, SC 29720
Phone: (803) 286-9948
Fax: (803) 286-5418
Nights / Weekends: 1-866-867-3886

Aiken, Barnwell, Edgefield, Saluda
222 Beaufort Street, NE
Aiken, SC 29801
Phone: (803) 642-1618
Fax: (803) 643-8386
Nights / Weekends: (803)645-8167

PEE DEE PUBLIC HEALTH REGION

Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marlboro, Marion
145 E. Cheves Street
Florence, SC 29506
Phone: (843) 661-4830
Fax: (843) 661-4859
Nights / Weekends: (843) 601-7051

Clarendon, Lee, Sumter
PO Box 1628
105 North Magnolia Street
Sumter, SC 29150
Phone: (803) 773-5511
Fax: (803) 775-9941
Nights/Weekends: (803) 458-1847

Georgetown, Horry, Williamsburg
1931 Industrial Park Road
Conway, SC 29526-5482
Phone: (843) 915-8804
Fax: (843) 365-0085
Nights/Weekends: (843) 340-4754

UPSTATE PUBLIC HEALTH REGION

Anderson, Oconee
220 McGee Road
Anderson, SC 29625
Phone: (864) 260-4358
Fax: (864) 260-5623
Nights / Weekends: 1-866-298-4442

Abbeville, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick
1736 S. Main Street
Greenwood, SC 29646
Phone: 1-888-218-5475
Fax: (864) 942-3690
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-420-1915

Greenville, Pickens
PO Box 2507
200 University Ridge
Greenville, SC 29602-2507
Phone: (864) 372-3133
Fax: (864) 282-4373
Nights / Weekends: (864) 809-3825

UPSTATE PUBLIC HEALTH REGION (continued)

Cherokee, Spartanburg, Union
PO Box 4217
151 E. Wood Street
Spartanburg, SC 29305-4217
Phone: (864) 372-3133
Fax: (864) 282-4373
Nights / Weekends: (864) 809-3825

**DHEC Bureau of Disease Control
Division of Acute Disease Epidemiology**
1751 Calhoun Street
Box 101106
Columbia, SC 29211
Phone: (803) 898-0861
Fax: (803) 898-0897
Nights / Weekends: 1-888-847-0902



www.scdhec.gov

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert	Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.
Health Advisory	Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.
Health Update	Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.